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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Radio Service
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

RELEASE ON RECEIPT
(Do not release after February 15,1941.)

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SUBJECT: "FORTNIGHTLY FOOD-SHOPPING TIPS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Consumers' Counsel, U.S.D.A.

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Once again here's news especially for the lady who plans the meals for the family and buys the food. Here are tips on supplies and prices of food on the market this time of year. As usual, these tips come direct from the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

First, comes news of fresh vegetables. Probably you've noticed just recently that tender vegetables haven't been so plentiful on market counters. A lot of cold, rainy weather in the South where fresh vegetables grow this time of year slowed up the picking of vegetables, damaged some acres of vegetables, and sent poorer-quality vegetables to market. But the return of favorable weather will bring larger and better supplies--in fact, better weather is likely to bring unusually large supplies of vegetables to market. You'll find more vegetables for sale than last year at this time.

Now from news of vegetables, let's turn to news of meat. The markets have more lamb, about the same amount of beef, and much less pork than they had a year ago. Pork and beef will not be as plentiful this month as in January. And all meats will probably be more expensive than a year ago.

Here's an item of news about butter. More butter this month than in January, and more butter on the market than a year ago! Wholesale prices of butter have remained about the same since the middle of January when the Surplus Marketing Administration began buying butter. Prices of butter are 2 cents a pound lower than a year ago. That is relatively low for this time of year.

Now for some tips on eggs and chickens. As good housekeepers know, the seasonal drop in the price of eggs usually comes between late November and early April. Most of this drop has taken place already. The wholesale and retail prices of top-quality eggs in New York have dropped about 13 and a half cents a dozen since the last of November. The current retail price of both top-quality and average-quality eggs in New York is only 2 to 3 cents a dozen above the low point in prices last April. Eggs may not get much cheaper this year, even for Easter. Supplies of eggs will probably be smaller this year than last, so prices will probably not go down as far as they did last April.

Now for news of chickens. The news is: More broilers from now on than a year ago! Broilers are the youngest chickens to go to market. They are so young and tender they cook in a few minutes under the direct flame of the broiler. They're extra good rubbed with butter before they go under the flame.

The news of fruit this time of year centers around oranges and grapefruit and apples. More oranges and grapefruit at lower prices than a year ago! That's the big news about citrus fruits. And these lower prices and larger supplies will probably continue for the remaining winter and spring months. Because of the large supplies of oranges and grapefruit prices won't go up as much as they usually do during the late winter and spring.

The apple story is rather different from the orange story. Apples continue to be more expensive than they were a year ago, even though supplies are smaller. The reason prices are higher while apples are fewer is that people are buying more apples, and the Government has been purchasing apples for relief use. Generally the price of apples goes up the first half of the year. This year apples probably will not become much more expensive than they are now.

The last news today is about the hardy vegetables on the market and the canned vegetables.

First about potatoes. The markets these days have considerably more potatoes to sell than they had a year ago. And larger supplies of both new and old potatoes are scheduled to be coming in from now on. This is the time of year when old potatoes usually become more expensive, and new potatoes get cheaper in price. But because supplies of old potatoes are so large right now, the price probably won't go up as much as it usually does this time of year.

Not only potatoes but also onions are more plentiful now than they were a year ago. During this month and next more onions will be coming to market from storage. These onions are the late fall crop of 1940. Then beginning in April and continuing to June, a big crop of Bermuda onions will be coming in from Texas.

But that good winter vegetable cabbage is not as plentiful as it was a year ago. The crop was about 10 percent smaller than last year's to begin with. And then along came the rains and cold weather in the South, and cut production down still farther.

As for canned vegetables, count on plenty of them. The pack which the canners began to put up last summer is 2 percent larger than the pack of a year ago, and much above average. More canned peas and canned tomatoes are on the market, but not so much canned corn and string beans.

That's all the food tips for today. Listen for more in a couple of weeks.

(2-3-41)

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